TUESDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2017 $1.88

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WEATHER
High: 72
Low: 47
Forecast, 12B

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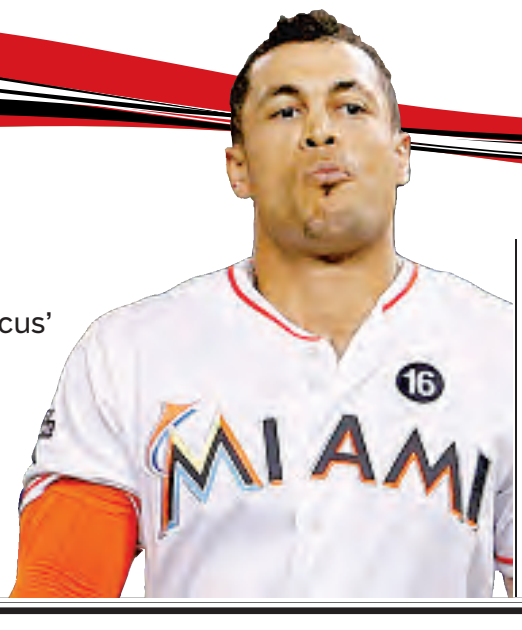
MARLINS TAKE A HIT

Parting shots

New Yankee Stanton recalls 'circus' years in Miami. **1C**

Dolphins 27, Patriots, 20

Miami surprises New England at Hard Rock Stadium. **1C**



HAPPY HANUKKAH!

LOCAL

More beautiful weather in store

Expect cool temperatures and plenty of sun. **1B**

GO!

New host for Fox New Year's Show

Steve Harvey replaces rapper Pitbull. **12B**

Jury rules against fired FAU professor

Plaintiff who blogged that Sandy Hook massacre was a hoax loses free speech lawsuit

By Paula McMahon
Staff writer

A former Florida Atlantic University professor who claimed he was fired in retaliation for blogging that the Sandy Hook massacre was a hoax lost his bid to get his job back.

Jurors in the federal free speech lawsuit filed by James Tracy took just three hours to reject his claim that the university terminated him for his conspiracy theory blog.

The university said he lost his tenured position because he repeatedly refused to obey reasonable requests from his bosses.

Tracy, who also harassed the parents of a 6-year-old who was killed in the Sandy Hook shootings, alleged the university was illegally punishing him for his free speech.

The only question the jury had to answer: Was Tracy's blogging a "motivating factor" in FAU's decision to fire him? To win, Tracy would have had to prove his case by a preponderance of the evidence — meaning it was more likely true than not true.

The eight jurors responded with a unanimous "no."

"We just tried to stay away from the emotion of the case and we focused on the evidence, not hearsay or opinions," the jury foreman told the South Florida Sun Sentinel.

Tracy, 52, a father of four from Boca Raton, was a communications professor for FAU from 2002 until January 2016. He received tenure in 2008.

The controversy began in late 2012 after Tracy posted conspiracy theories on his Memory Hole blog about whether the Sandy Hook mass shooting — which killed 20 children and six

See **TRACY, 5A**

CARLINE JEAN/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

James Tracy, left, who was fired from his job in January 2016, leaves the Federal Courthouse in West Palm Beach.

Lighting up the night

MARGATE CITY HALL/COURTESY

A musical 3-D laser show is set to transform the outside of Margate City Hall Friday night. The eight-minute event, similar to last year's show, pictured above, is part of Winter Festival. The fest will feature photo ops with Santa and rides for kids. **Story, 3B.**

NYC bomb suspect inspired by ISIS

By Nina Agrawal, Brian Bennett and Noah Bierman
Los Angeles Times

NEW YORK — The suspect in a bomb attack in New York City's transit system Monday told investigators he had been inspired by Islamic State's recent call for attacks in Western cities around the Christmas holidays, a federal law enforcement official said.

The suspect, identified as 27-year-old Bangladesh native Akayed Ullah, was injured by the explosion and in custody after authorities said he detonated a makeshift pipe bomb near Times Square that also left four other people injured and

See **BOMB, 6A**

FAU, biotech giant want to lure young scientists

By Scott Travis | Staff writer

Florida Atlantic University is hoping to become home to some of the top young scientists in the United States.

The university is partnering with the Max Planck Society, the Germany-based biotech research giant, to create a South Florida pipeline for future scientists who can help develop cures and treatments for ailments such as Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease, schizophrenia, autism, and epilepsy.

They're planning to do it with an undergraduate honors program they say is the first of its kind in the world. It will begin in the fall and start with about 100 students, officals said.

"I'm really concerned about the future of science, so it's important to train the next generation of scientists," said David Fitzpatrick, CEO and scientific director of Max Planck Florida. "To be able to take young minds and bring them into an environment where they can participate and engage with Max Planck scientists is a fantastic opportunity."

Max Planck, which houses its U.S. research on FAU's Jupiter campus, currently works with FAU graduate students. This will be the first time it will work with undergraduate students, officials said.

FAU officials announced the program Monday at an event on the main Boca Raton campus,

See **FAU, 6A**

Hastings blasts sex harassment settlement

By Anthony Man
Staff writer

A sexual harassment accusation against U.S. Rep. Alcee Hastings resulted in a $220,000 lawsuit settlement — money that the congressman said should not have been paid because he did nothing wrong.

The allegations about conduct that former staffer Winsome Packer said occurred from January 2008 to February 2010

See **HASTINGS, 6A**

YOUR NATION, YOUR WORLD

Alabama Senate race down to the wire

National political leaders made last-minute efforts to sway voters in today's controversial election. **2A**

California wildfire explodes

Firefighters kept a wall of flames from descending mountains into coastal neighborhoods. **2A**

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